

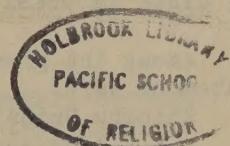
JAPAN CHRISTIAN ACTIVITY NEWS

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"MEN OF FAITH" RAISE UNITED VOICE AGAINST SHRINE BILL

Declaring the proposed Yasukuni Shrine Bill to be a violation of religious liberty and separation of state and religion, the heads of 67 religious bodies representing major groups among Buddhist, Sectarian Shinto, New Religions and Christian believers, addressed a statement to Liberal Democratic Party President Eisaku Sato asking that the Bill be dropped.

At a press conference held Tuesday, May 6, at the Akasaka Prince Hotel, religious leaders, including Dodan Kuruma, leader of the All Japan Buddhist Association, Nikkyo Niwano, head of Rissho Kosei-kai, Toru Takakura, general secretary of the United Church of Christ in Japan, and Mrs. Tamaki Uemura, honorary chairman of the YWCA, expressed the reasons for their opposition to the Bill and, in some cases, their disillusionment with the LDP for its handling of the Bill.

The united action came at a time when the Bill was momentarily expected to be introduced into the Diet, after long months of discussion and revision in an attempt to find a way to get government-support for the former national Shrine, which until the end of World War II was controlled by the government as a part of State Shinto. Asking for government support is the War Bereaved Families Association of families whose relatives are enshrined there.

Christians, who have long been felt that nationalization threatens the Constitutional guarantee of religious liberty, the separation of religion and state, and Japan's peace stance have been active in various programs of education and protest. Many other groups have recently been increasing the tempo of their activity in opposition. The statement is the first joint reaction to the threat of the Bill to religion as well as to the human rights of all citizens, whether followers of a religious faith or not.

(continued)

CORRECTION:

Page 6 of the April 25, No. 343, issue of JCAN carried a list of the Member Denominations and Organizations. Please note that the ~~listing~~ of Japan Bible Society - Nihon Seisho Kyokai - should appear among the Members. We are sorry for the omission of this full name from the listing and ask that it be inserted on your copy for future reference.

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"We represent many different points of view with regard to the Yasukuni Shrine problem," said Kyotoku Nakano, Japan Religionists' Peace Conference "but we are united in our opposition to it."

Particular concern was expressed for the future of the Shinto religion, if the government has the power to "dereligionize" a place which has been designated by a religious body as the place where "the gods are worshipped and prayers offered to them." A desire by some to return to Emperor-worship was cited as possible motivation for seeking government-affiliation.

Among the groups whose names appeared among the 67 signers of the statement were:

Shinshu Union; Nichiren, Jodo and Tentai Buddhist Sects; Japan Religionists Peace Conference; All Japan Buddhist Association; Tenrikyo; P L Kyodan; Risshokoseikai; Union of New Religious Organizations of Japan; United Church of Christ in Japan; Japan Episcopal Church; Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church; Japan Baptist Renmei; Presbyterian and Reformed Church in Japan; Reformed Church in Japan; Japan Evangelical Fellowship; Tokyo Union Theological Seminary; Doshisha; Rikkyo (St. Paul's) University; Japan YWCA; Japan YMCA; WCTU; NCC; Education Association of Christian Schools; Catholic Scholars' Association; several Shinto groups.

JAPAN ECUMENICAL ASSOCIATION TAKES SHAPE

Describing themselves as a group of Christians of common faith who are "aware of their present divisions and intend to overcome them," 49 prominent Tokyo Christian leaders, Japanese and foreign, have announced the formation of the Japan Ecumenical Association, which will hold its first session on Saturday, May 24, at the Oriens Institute for Religious Research.

An Invitation, sent out in the name of Dr. Chitose Kishi on behalf of the preparatory committee, says that for the last two years a group of Christians have met in prayer and discussion, and reached finally the decision to establish the Association, which will for the present have its offices at Oriens Institute and the Japan Biblical Seminary.

Emphasizing membership as being on a personal and private basis rather than as representative of the respective churches, the draft of the Statutes outlines the purposes of the Association as follows:

1. To foster all contact, dialogue and cooperation contributing toward church unity;
2. To study, from the ecumenical point of view, the missionary approach to Japanese society;
3. To promote contact, dialogue and cooperation with non-Christians in Japan and with the leading circles of Japanese society;
4. To maintain liaison with similar organs here and abroad.

Activities will include study; sponsorship of conferences, meetings and retreats for research and consultation; publication; and liaison with similar organizations in Japan and abroad.

In the announcement of the opening of the Association, the Promoters say, "It is our fervent wish and prayer that this initiative may bring increased vigor to the Church and signal the advent of a new era of missionary proclamation in Japan."

Listed among the Promoters are Makoto Goto, Gosaku Okada, Yoshinobu Kumazawa, In Ha Lee, Masatoshi Doi, Isamu Omura, Kiyoko Cho, C. Powles, F. Uttaendaele, Akira Endo, Kikaku Shimamura, Shunzo Miyauchi, and J. Spae. There will be both regular memberships with a nominal membership fee and associate memberships for these invited to assist the Association.

1969-70 YEAR BOOK EDITORS ANNOUNCE PLANS

The issues that make 1970 a critical year for Japan and nations related to her will be the central focus for the 1969-70 Japan Christian Year Book, according to an announcement by Editors Ryozo Hara, Ian MacLeod, and James Colligan.

The 1969-70 issue, scheduled to be off the press in December, becomes a biennial with this edition. Continuing the pattern of the 1968 issue, the Year Book will be a joint publication of the National Catholic Committee of Japan and the Japan National Christian Council.

Subjects to be treated by leading Japanese and foreign writers and scholars include: The Mutual Security Treaty, Okinawa, Christian Universities, Recent Ecumenical Developments, The Christian Pavilion at Expo '70, and Religion and State.

The 1969-70 edition will be approximately 288 pages, A5 size and sell for ¥1,200 in Japan and \$5.00 overseas. An order blank will be included in an early issue of JCAN, but those wishing to place orders immediately may do so through the JCAN or NCC.

EACC SCHEDULES DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE IN KYOTO

What the Church's responsibility is in Economic Development will be the theme of a Conference to be sponsored in Kyoto in July, 1970 by the East Asia Christian Conference and SODEPAX, the joint committee of the World Council of Churches and the Pontifical Commission on Justice and Peace of the Roman Catholic Church on Social Development and Peace.

Tentative plans, to be developed further when the preparatory committee meets in Kyoto in early June, call for a conference of 120 delegates -- 40 from EACC member churches, 40 from Catholic churches in East Asia, and 40 nominated by the preparatory committee from among specialists with international organizations or persons with special competences in the area of development.

MAKING WAY FOR THE NEW

Signs that new patterns of cooperation in carrying on the mission of Christ in Japan are on the horizon was evident as the Council of Cooperation, a liaison body for seven North American mission boards, The United Church of Christ in Japan, a group of Christian schools, and a group of social work institutions, met in semi-annual assembly Friday, April 25, with COC chairman Masahisa Suzuki presiding.

In line with the recommendations of the COC Consultation held in February, the formation of the 12-man committee to study and present proposals for restructuring the COC was announced: Yoichiro Saeki, chairman; Masahisa Suzuki, Jiro Shimizu, Masao Takenaka, Yorichi Manabe, Shiro Abe, Wallace Brownlee, Patricia Patterson, Kentaro Shiozuki, Marjorie Tunbridge, Kentaro Buma, and one more to be named.

Taking up the recommendation that a study committee be organized to rethink education from "a new perspective of mission in the modern world," the Kyodan and schools' members of COC agreed to discuss in their respective memberships the selection of personnel for such a study and the further delineation of the topic and process.

General Secretary Toru Takakura of The United Church reported that as a result of recent Kyodan reflections on missionary recruitment, assignment and relationships, it has been decided not to request additional evangelistic missionary personnel for the next year or two but rather to give careful study to the present procedures in order to assure maximum use and integration of missionary personnel in the total life of the United Church.

Turning to the 1970 budget askings to be referred overseas, the Kyodan reported that it is continuing to decrease the amount requested to overseas mission boards for funds for operational expenses, with the intention that no such funds will be requested after 1971. Funds would then be requested only for such special efforts as mass communication evangelism and large-scale projects in mass housing developments.

In contrast to the Kyodan's decision to waive requests for new evangelistic missionaries for 1970, COC Education Secretary Ruth Elmer reported requests for missionary teachers for 16 universities and 23 high schools, the majority of the requests being for career or short-term missionaries to teach English.

Both schools and social work groups agreed to resubmit capital askings for projects that have been approved previously but not met picked up by cooperating mission boards, in the hope that these can be completed and there be a clean slate beginning next year. Mission boards have, it was reported, claimed that it is increasingly difficult to secure funds for routine institutional expenses or projects and have expressed the desire that there be more in the way of "new projects."

CHARLES IGLEHART DIES

News has come of the death of another of Japan's veteran missionaries. Dr. Charles W. Iglehart, 87, who spent more than half of his life as a missionary in Japan and served in a number of key positions as scholar, educator, linguist and writer, died of a heart attack in Dunedin, Florida, Sunday, May 4.

Dr. Iglehart, who came to Japan in 1909, taught at Togijuku Boys School, Hirosaki, Aoyama Gakuin and Tokyo Union Theological Seminary. He was at one time associate general secretary of the Japan National Christian Council. Associated with International Christian University in research and writing, from 1960-63, he is author of A Century of Protestant Christianity in Japan, Cross and Crisis in Japan and International Christian University. He was also president of the Methodist Publishing House, forerunner of the Kyo Bun Kwan.

Dr. Iglehart is survived by his wife, the former Caroline S. Peckham, who served at Kwassui Gakuin and ICU before her marriage to Dr. Iglehart in 1964, and by three daughters, one of whom, Mrs. Stuart Lillico, lives in Sendai.

ORATORIO, "JOB", TO BE PERFORMED

The oratorio, "Job," by Masayoshi Abe, which had its premier last year at Meiji Gakuin, will be performed on Sunday, May 25, at 6:30 at Tokyo Metropolitan Festival Hall.

Orchestra: Tokyo Kangengaku Kyokai
Chorus : Tokyo Philharmonic Chorus, Oratorio Choir, Tokyo Woman's Christian College Choir
Conductor: Eisai Ikemiya
Soloists : Katsura Nakazawa, Hiroko Kimura, Akihiko Fujinuma, Koichi Tajima, Tadahiko Hirano.

Tickets are available at the Christian Music Institute, (368-0020) and Million Concert Association (501-5638-9) for ¥600, ¥800, ¥1,000, ¥1,500.

YAMADA TO ATTEND RUSSIAN PEACE POW-WOW

Responding to an invitation from the Metropolitan Nikodim of Leningrad and Novgorod to send a representative to "a conference of all religions in the USSR for cooperation and peace among nations," to be held in Zagorsk July 1-4, the NCC executive committee has asked Rev. Jo Yamada, general secretary, Japan Episcopal Church, to attend.

The aim of the meeting, which is said to be the outcome of a consultation of Christian, Moslem, Judaic and Buddhist religious functionaries in December, is described as that of "intensifying and arousing responsibility for the fate of the peace among believers of every religion in the world as the fulfillment of their mission and duty."

SKILLS WORKSHOP

AVACO will hold its 20th Audio Visuals Workshop July 23-26 at Dankaiso, Atami, offering a wide variety of courses in children's work, music, recreation and visual aids techniques such as ebanashi, puppetry, papercraft, prints, and photography.

The conference quota is 500 persons. Inquiries and reservation fees (¥1,500 per person) can be sent to Christian Audio-Visuals Center, Attention Summer Workshop, P.O. Box 123, 4-13 Shibuya 4-chome, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo 150. The fee for four days and three nights' meals and lodging is ¥6,600.

MEETING ON SECULARIZATION AND DISBELIEF IN ASIA

"Secularization and Disbelief in Asia" will be the subject of a four-day conference in Tokyo June 1-4 under the sponsorship of the Secretariat for Relations with Non-Christian Religions in Rome and the Tokyo section of this office.

The theme will be handled in three parts: Cultural Causes, the Situation in Various Religions, Future Plans of the Secretariat.

Along with members of the Secretariat from Asian countries, observers from various organizations and specializations have been invited. Attending on behalf of the NCC will be Dr. Cyril Powles, The Central Theological College, and Rev. Yoshinobu Kumazawa, Tokyo Union Theological Seminary.

THE IMI OF I.M.I.

The stirrings of what may be an important innovation in urban church work in Japan are apparent in a new project emerging under the initials IMI and carrying the English title, "Institute on Metropolitan Issues," and the Japanese name, Shutoken Mondai Kenkyusho.

The Institute, whose name suggests a somewhat more formal structure than yet exists, is the outgrowth of the study and vision of ten Tokyo pastors who see as of growing importance the influencing of "power centers" in the Tokyo area. Each man is a pastor or assistant pastor of a Metropolitan Tokyo church.

The Institute, which recently was "introduced" at a meeting of interested persons, anticipates formation of a series of sections on industry and business, politics, etc., whose members would help to provide basic resource materials on key issues for the use of laymen, pastors and non-Christians as well. Date will be made available through publications, discussion groups, leadership training sessions, and special study efforts. One of the primary purposes of the Institute is to feed into local churches and to local church members information needed to identify issues that have a critical bearing on human living conditions and to develop ways of bringing about decisions that benefit and strengthen human life.

According to Rev. Shuzo Oshimo, of Bancho Church, the Institute will serve as a bridge between secular society and the church. He notes, for example, the phenomenon of the young people who come to Tokyo for jobs right out of junior high school, dropped suddenly into the whirlpool of Tokyo's life. How can the various people--employers, rooming house operators, police and others whose lives touch these boys, be helped to see the problems and to take part in improving the living situation of these and other young people in the city? What can churches do for these groups?

According to one member of the group, the possibility of affecting decisions, often accepted as negligible in modern city affairs, has been proved where the power structure is known and the necessary relationships established. He cites the instance of planners of a large new city development who responded favorably when they were confronted with realistic problems encountered by families living in such cities, with the result that social environment became a factor in the agency's planning.

IMI is at present in the throes of a study of funding possibilities. At the same time, the weekly meetings continue and members individually seek to maintain and extend their contacts with key persons in all sectors of city life. Members of the present germinal IMI see it as in fluid form now, its eventual pattern coming as a result of the functions it undertakes and of the expansion of its personnel to include laymen and community members.

The Institute members plan to maintain close relationships with the Urban-Industrial Mission Committee of the NCC as well as with the Tokyo district of the United Church of Christ, the original group of men all being related to the United Church. Taking preliminary responsibility for developing IMI have been Isamu Ukai, Tsuguro Oishi, Mitsuru Shinohara, Kohei Kuyama, Shuzo Oshimo, Shiro Kawamata, Yoshiaki Mizoi, A. A. Carter.